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Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists

Implementation of the UNECE Statistical Programme 2014

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Report of the Work Session on Migration Statistics

Summary

The joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics was held on 10–12 September 2014 in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova as part of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme 2014–2015.

The present document is the summary report of that meeting and is provided to inform the Conference of European Statisticians of the organization and outcomes of the meeting

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I. Introduction

1. The joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics was held on 10-12 September 2014 in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova. It was attended by participants from Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and Uzbekistan. The European Commission was represented by Eurostat. The Eurasian Economic Commission, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CISStat) were also represented. An expert from Moscow State University (Russian Federation) participated at the invitation of the UNECE secretariat.

2. A number of participants could attend the Work Session thanks to financial support provided by the Russian Federation and the European Union.

II. Organization of the meeting

3. Mr. Alfredo Bustos y de la Tijera from Mexico was elected as Chair of the meeting.

4. The following substantive topics were discussed at the meeting:

   a) Experiences with using data from the 2010 round of censuses for measuring migration

   b) Migration behaviour, intention, and indicators of integration

   c) Better utilization of administrative data sources to measure migration

   d) Measurement of "hard-to-count" migrant groups

   e) Emerging issues and methodologies for the measurement of migration.

5. The following participants acted as Discussants: for sub-session (a) Mr. Giampaolo Lanzieri (Eurostat), for sub-session (b) Ms. Monica Perez (Italy), for sub-session (c) Ms. Irina Zbarskaya (CIS-Stat) and Mr. Han Nicolaas (Netherlands), for sub-session (d) Mr. Tengiz Tsekvava (Georgia), and for sub-session (e) Mr. Marcel Heiniger (Switzerland).

6. The discussion at the meeting was based on papers available on the UNECE website.[1]

[1] http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2014.10.migration2.html

III. Summary of discussion

1. Experiences with using data from the 2010 round of censuses for measuring migration

7. Discussion was based on papers from the United Kingdom, Turkey, Tunisia, CIS-Stat, the Canton of Zurich, Italy and the Republic of Moldova.

8. The paper from the United Kingdom looked at migration questions in their most recent population census, highlighting new questions on national identity, passports held, year of entry into the UK and intention to stay. Results from the 2011 Census were discussed, including comparisons of country of birth to passports held, year and age at arrival, and determination of short-term residents from the new intended duration of stay question.

9. The paper from Turkey presented results from their 2011 census, the first to combine register-based population data with a large-scale sample survey. The new methodological approach was discussed, as well as the main findings for the foreign-born population by different characteristics and the question on residence five years ago.

10. The paper from Tunisia discussed sources of migration data in Tunisia, as well as their experiences collecting immigration and emigration information on the 2014 census. Improvements made to the 2014 census survey instrument and data collection methods were also presented, followed by general preliminary findings.

11. CIS-Stat made an overview of census results from the 2010 population census in nine countries from the CIS region. Methods, questions asked, and results were compared and contrasted, for both internal and international migration, while data exchange and dissemination strategies were also discussed, with an eye towards standardizing data collection for the 2020 round of censuses.

12. The Canton of Zurich presented information about new migration patterns in the Zurich region and beyond, using data from the most recent Swiss Census and structural surveys. The paper highlighted the dichotomy between highly educated migrants from the EU and less educated migrants from other parts of the world coming to Switzerland.

13. Italy discussed their experiences with the 2011 register-based Italian Census, particularly with regards to improving measurement and coverage of foreign populations at the municipal level using administrative sources. Results show that while their efforts helped reduce the undercount of foreigners on the latest census, additional actions must be undertaken at the municipal level to further improve coverage of this population.

14. The Republic of Moldova provided a methodological overview of how migration was measured in their recent 2014 census, as well as some preliminary results. Migration was considered to be one of the most important demographic topics in the Moldovan census, with over ten questions directly related to its measurement, including place of birth, citizenship, location of and reason for absence, previous place of residence, and duration of residence.

15. Discussion revolved around a number of general questions related to the nature of census migration questions and their strengths and weaknesses, including time-intervals used, migration vs. migration events, intention of stay, and ways to improve coverage/non-response. Countries also responded to individual questions related to their papers.

2. Migration behaviour, intention, and indicators of integration

16. Discussion was based on papers from Canada, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

17. The presentation from Canada presented the preliminary results of the UNECE Task Force on the Measurement of the Socio-economic Conditions of Migrants, which plans to conduct its work by the end of the year. In addition to discussing the Task Force's objectives, methods, and identified socio-economic dimensions and indicators, it also illustrated ways to consider a longitudinal perspective.

18. Switzerland examined a series of indicators they have developed to measure integration of the population with a migration background in Switzerland. The paper presented the political background for the exercise and over 60 indicators covering a variety of social and economic dimensions, as well as some analysis of the integration situation in Switzerland and future work to come.

19. Netherlands presented the results of their attempt to integrate administrative data sources to compensate for incomplete registration information on reasons for immigrant moves, including evaluation of intended (registered) vs. actual reasons for move. Information on the derived reason for move was required for more than half of immigrants to the Netherlands, while many were found to have different reported vs. derived reasons for move. The impact of these findings was further discussed.

20. The discussion considered how to possibly prioritize and standardize integration indicators among countries, as well as how to interpret aggregate indicators when migrants are both highly and low-skilled, or when countries have selective migration policies. Comparisons to native populations and the need for a longitudinal perspective were discussed as well.

3. Better utilization of administrative data sources to measure migration

21. Discussion was based on papers from Moscow State University, the Republic of Moldova, the United Kingdom, Slovenia, Spain, Italy, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Belarus.

22. Moscow State University described recent advances in the ability to measure migration in the Russian Federation using administrative sources. In addition to discussing existing administrative sources, and various strengths and weaknesses of these sources, the paper addressed issues related to the relationship between producers of administrative data and national statistical agencies. Recent methodological changes to how Russia measures migration flows are described, as well as issues related to measuring administrative changes vs. real migration events.

23. The presentation from the Republic of Moldova examined the structure and capacity of their administrative systems to measure migration, as well as a description of their recently published Extended Migration Profile. Methodological considerations and results from the Extended Migration Profile were also presented.

24. The United Kingdom's second paper addressed systematic improvements to their administrative data systems to better measure international migration at the local authority level. Special attention was paid on describing the challenge of integrating different data sources and improving communication and flow of information between the UK's ONS and the producers of administrative data on migration.

25. The paper from Slovenia described efforts to improve missing information from unregistered migrants in their Central Population Register by integrating information from other administrative data sources. Efforts have shown that under- and over-coverage of

migrants (unregistered immigrants and emigrants) in Slovenia's register based census can be improved by incorporating other administrative sources, but additional methodological work is still needed for measuring these populations.

26. Spain's paper detailed the methodological background for measuring migration via its Municipal Population Register database (PADRON). In addition to describing these procedures and results of measuring emigration flows from Spain, they proposed exchanging individual-level register data with other countries as a way to improve measurement of migration, particularly emigration.

27. The second paper from Italy looked at how new administrative data sources will be used to create a centralized population register which will improve measurement of migration. This register will allow for the continuous collection of migration data. Its objective is to improve quality of migration statistics, as well as create new avenues for methodological research and data exchange.

28. Tajikistan presented an overview of on-going activities to improve labour migration statistics, particularly through the better use of administrative data. A number of methodological challenges were discussed, including developing common statistical definitions for regular and irregular labour migration, measurement of remittances, proxy respondents on household surveys, how to identify labour migrants, and discrepancies found among different administrative data sources.

29. A summary of the legal framework and data sources available to measure migration in Azerbaijan was made by their statistical office. Data available from population censuses, administrative sources (and development of a population register), and sample surveys were all described, as well as plans to further improve these statistics.

30. Belarus described existing legal frameworks and available data sources to measure migration, including border control, register-based, census and household surveys. Methods to improve measurement of emigration in particular were described, including comparison of flows between Belarus, Kazakhstan, and the Russian Federation.

31. The discussion focused on the opportunities and challenges faced when using administrative data, particularly given the differing levels of development of administrative data systems across the region. Ways to improve cooperation between national migration services, maintainers of central population registers, statistical agencies, and other producers of administrative data were discussed, as well as who should be responsible for which tasks. Finally, the discussion addressed Spain's proposal for the exchange of individual micro-data between countries, as well as ways to integrate various administrative data sources to improve measurement of migration.

4. Measurement of "hard-to-count" migrant groups

32. The discussion was based on papers from Lithuania, Albania, Hungary, Norway and UNDP.

33. The paper from Lithuania described their efforts to improve the measurement of return migrants, in particular the extensive use of administrative data sources and the most recent population census. Results of a recent longitudinal analysis of return migrants were presented, which enabled deeper understanding of the historical behavioural patterns of return migrants to Lithuania.

34. Albania presented their recent experiences using a return migration survey to gain better insight into return migration processes in Albania. This survey was able to identify the characteristics of return migrants and provide additional information about their

experiences and reintegration into Albania, as well as develop policy recommendations on how best to tailor reintegration services for returnees.

35. Hungary, as part of the SEEMIG project, described their recent attempt to measure emigration using the labour force survey. In addition to information on household members living abroad, direct and indirect sampling methods were used to interview any current or former household member or sibling who had left Hungary since 1990, though the response rate for this phase of the project was quite low.

36. The paper from Norway described the challenges and quality of data when using population registers to measure emigration from Norway, including public participation, legal and regulatory considerations, and how register systems are updated. Underreporting of emigration is common and Norway's attempts to account for this were described, including use of expired resident permits, information from other persons or institutions, and unknown resident addresses. Further areas for data quality improvement were also addressed.

37. UNDP discussed preliminary results from their Central Asia regional study on migration, remittances, and human development. Particular attention was paid to describing the integration of several Central Asian countries into Russia's labour market and the impact of remittance flows and their role in reducing poverty in those countries, as well as the human costs associated with this dependence on migration.

38. Discussion revolved around the ability to mobilize public participation needed for measurement of migration via registers and household surveys. Issues of trust (both of and from respondents), sampling, question sensitivity, and the use of migration information for public policy making were also discussed.

5. Emerging issues and methodologies for the measurement of migration

39. Discussion was based on papers from Estonia, Mexico, UNECE, and Eurostat.

40. Estonia presented their experiences using "big data" from Estonian and Finnish cell phone companies to measure commuting and other forms of cross border mobility between Estonia and Finland. A number of data and methodological issues relative to measurement of migration were proposed for discussion, including cell phone coverage problems, data confidentiality and cost issues, limitations related to the possible use of more than one SIM card by one individual, distinguishing "trips" from changes of usual residence, as well as the potential of measuring short-term or circular migration.

41. Mexico provided an update on the status of the Task Force to Measure Circular Migration, describing the progress of the group towards coming to a common international definition for circular migration, taking into account frequency, duration, directionality, reason, and developmental impact. Testing of preliminary definitions is currently taking place using data from Austria, Estonia, Italy, Norway and Sweden and steps for future work described.

42. UNECE presented stock data collected from NSOs on dual-citizenship and tried to assess its impact on migration flow statistics. Though data are limited, for countries that do provide this information, dual citizenship was seen to be a rapidly growing phenomenon, with characteristics that varied by country. Though the number of dual citizens is currently relatively small, it could have an impact on migration statistics in the near future, particularly when using citizenship-based data from other countries to estimate emigration or "mirror statistics."

43. The paper from Eurostat looked at advanced log-linear estimation methods to calculate migration flows in the EU region using stock data from member countries.

Development of these methods could provide a method to overcome the issue of data quality and availability in migration statistics, particularly for estimating flows of persons born in specific areas, though much work still needs to be done to develop this methodology to better estimate country-to-country flows.

44. Discussion covered the potential applications of using "big data" to measure international migration, including a number of limitations that will need to be overcome. Several countries discussed dual-citizenship legislation in their countries and the recent increase in the dual citizenship. Finally, the technical capacity of countries to carry out advanced estimation procedures was also addressed at the regional level.

IV. Recommendations for future work

45. The results of the seminar on migration statistics were discussed at the April 2014 CES plenary session, including ways to implement some of their recommendations.

46. The meeting proposed to establish task forces to pursue methodological work on the following topics:

(a) Integration of multiple data sources for measuring migration, including data sources within a country and between countries, and good practices in communication between national statistical offices and producers of administrative data

(b) Assessment of the quality of migration data.

47. The meeting proposed that the next Work Session on Migration Statistics take place in 2016. The following topics were suggested for discussion in the 2016 Work Session:

a) Use of administrative data

b) Socio-economic characteristics of migrants and people with foreign background

c) Labour migration and its impact on the labour market

d) Dissemination and use of migration statistics for policymaking

e) Asylum seekers and refugees

f) Irregular migration

g) Good practices in communication between national statistical offices and producers of administrative data

h) Good practices in data exchange between countries

i) Emerging issues, including new methods to estimate and project migration.

V. Adoption of the report of the meeting

48. The meeting adopted parts I, II, IV, and V of the report before it adjourned. Part III was finalised by the secretariat after the meeting.